

**TOWN OF AMHERST HUMAN SERVICE FUNDING APPLICATION**

AGENCY NAME: Milestone Ministries, Inc.

AGENCY ADDRESS: P.O. Box 51875 Indian Orchard, MA 01151

AGENCY PHONE NO: 413-304-2112 CONTACT PERSON: Jack Desroches

2011 CDBG REQUEST: \$115,000

**Cover Sheet – Social Service Activity****1. Project Name:**

Emergency Shelter and Social Services for the Homeless, to operate from November 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012

**2. Budget Request: \$115,000****3. Activity Identification—please check one**

☒ Homelessness and sheltering

☐ Education: outreach and advocacy

☐ Mental health services

☐ Emergency & preventive services: rental, food, fuel, shelter and transitional assistance

☐ Other

**4. Number of low/moderate income individuals/families served:**

50+, based on data collected from the 2009-2010 emergency shelter season.

**5. Describe how you will ensure that participants meet low/moderate income requirements:**

Emergency shelter for adults in our community during the cold weather months is a base-line prevention for saving the lives of homeless individuals. While the emergency shelter will not require confirmation of low/moderate income to enter the facility or to receive services initially, guests will be screened by staff and volunteers during their stay to identify their respective level of need and vulnerability. Individual assessments will be conducted by the agency (Milestone) throughout the sheltering season and reported, as required, on a monthly basis.

The population served by the emergency shelter, based upon intake data from 2009-2010 and Milestone's experience managing emergency shelters in the region, confirm that individual guests of the emergency shelter are predominately (>90%) low income (defined as individual income not to exceed \$43,800). Although some individuals may receive modest state and/or veterans benefits or have income from others sources, this individual income limit is significantly higher than the incomes of the vast majority of the local homeless population (per data collected at the 2009-2010 shelter and subsequently confirmed by social service agencies who continued to provide services to homeless individuals who were guests at the shelter during

the 2009-2010 season). Data and experience strongly indicate that poverty/low income status is a primary, if not the only, cause of homeless in the region.

**6. Demonstrate consistency with the Town's Community Development Strategy and the priorities as established by the Community Development Committee:**

As a result of a public hearing held on September 28, 2010, the Community Development Committee determined that "Homelessness and sheltering" was the number one social service priority of 2011.

The Community Development Strategy subsequently identified the priority to "provide community services to meet the needs of all residents." Article IV of the CDS specifically identifies as "especially important at this time are **services that support homeless individuals that will include shelter services, case management,** and rental and fuel assistance for those at risk of homelessness (see page 4, CDS)." In addition, the CDS cites the priority "to continue and expand Town funded social service activities." The 1998 *Amherst Visions* document, upon which this strategy is based, stresses "the desire to 'serve the underserved' in our community." Funding to continue emergency sheltering services directly addresses the number one priority of the Committee Development Strategy for 2011 which also reflects the community support for services that address the underserved homeless population expressed in the September 28, 2010 public hearing.

**Please submit responses to the following questions:**

**A. Please describe in full the project for which you are requesting funding:**

The project proposes to operate an emergency shelter for homeless adult individuals from November 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012 (please see attached Proposal and Operating Plan).

**B. What is the community's need for the proposed project/program?**

**Define the need or problem to be addressed by the proposed project. Explain why the project is important. Provide evidence of the severity of the need or problem. Who the affected population and why is this population presently underserved or not served?**

Based upon data collected from the 2009-2010 emergency shelter and local social services agencies who serve the local homeless population, there are an estimated 50 homeless individuals in our community at any given time, of which approximately 20 are considered to be chronically homeless. These individuals are predominately low-income, several of whom (+/- 40%) receive or are eligible to receive disability benefits per state guidelines. The local homeless population, while somewhat transient by necessity, represents individuals that can be considered chronically homeless, and thus in need of seasonal shelter during the harshest winter weather to prevent death from exposure, as well as individuals, who, for a variety of reasons, find themselves without options for immediate shelter. An emergency shelter thus provides a front line of defense against the threat of death or illness among the local homeless population, as well as a site for providing assistance to those whose homeless status typically qualifies them for available social services.

At least two deaths have been linked to homelessness in Amherst in 2008. Prior to December, 2009, the Town of Amherst relied upon emergency homeless shelters in Northampton and regional shelters (Springfield, Greenfield, Montague) to shelter its homeless population and/or provided immediate shelter in motels to individuals on an emergency basis. In 2007, the Committee on Homelessness was established by the Town to focus on issues of homelessness in our community and recommend policies to address the needs of homeless individuals in our community. The Committee's immediate goal was to provide a site to safeguard the homeless population from exposure during the coldest winter months and thus, to prevent death and serious illness.

With the establishment of a Warming Place/Temporary Overnight Shelter during the winter of 2009-2010, the Town was able to provide such a site for the homeless for the first time in our community. Such a site, it has been subsequently learned, not only provides shelter and nutrition to our most vulnerable population, but also serves as a effective means through which to administer critical social services that address the root causes of homelessness.

### **C. Community Involvement**

#### **What process was used to select this particular project? How was the process responsive to expressed community need?**

The Select Board, Town administrators, and members of the Town's appointed committees (i.e. the Community Development Committee and the Committee on Homelessness) have, in a variety of public meetings and hearings, recognized the importance of addressing issues of homelessness in our community, and in particular, the need for emergency shelter during the coldest winter months. The Committee on Homelessness has consistently met 3-4 times per month in public session to discuss the project and actively seek community input. Invited participants in this process have included members of Town appointed committees, representatives from local social service agencies, Town administrators, the heads of the Building and Health Departments, members of the faith-based community and local business people.

In 2009, the Town recognized the need for an emergency shelter for the homeless and made funds available to open The Warming Place. In recognition of the continued need for emergency shelter, an RFP was issued in August 2010 by the Town seeking an agency to operate an emergency shelter for the 2010-2011 season. The project is funded through a \$75,000 CDBG grant. Milestone, in partnership with Vita Nova and The First Baptist Church, was awarded the contract by the Town in late October. At this date, Milestone is making preparations to open the shelter as soon as possible, pending approval for all necessary permits required by the Town and state.

Support for an emergency shelter has been strong within the Amherst community, as expressed by residents at recent CDBG public hearings, as well as through public meetings and petitions signed by more than 200 residents in one day seeking to reopen the shelter when it was closed prematurely last spring. Last winter, the shelter benefitted from the active involvement of community volunteers, including volunteers from the immediate neighborhood of the First Baptist Church (the shelter site), members of area churches and student volunteers from UMass, Amherst and Smith Colleges.

#### **Define the process that will be used to maintain involvement of the project beneficiaries in the implementation of the project:**

This project represents a fundamental need for emergency shelter for the homeless population during the winter. Based upon the 2009-2010 shelter season and the subsequent involvement of local social service agencies with homeless individuals in our community, an emergency shelter is anticipated to be utilized by +/- 50 homeless individuals in the community. Moreover, local homeless individuals have expressed their appreciation for and anticipation of the continuation of

an emergency shelter both privately with social service staff, members of the Committee on Homelessness, and in various public meetings (i.e. meetings of the Committee on Homelessness, Community Development Committee public hearings, Select Board meetings, etc.). In short, an emergency shelter for the 2011-2012 season will be used and appreciated by its beneficiaries.

#### **D. Project Feasibility**

The project impact will be evaluated upon the extent to which the response meets the following criteria:

- 1. Describe what evidence exists to show that the community at large or project beneficiaries will use the project. Include documentation of demand for the activity through summary descriptions of surveys, inquiries, waiting lists or past participation.**

With the strong recommendation of the Committee on Homelessness, a Warming Place/emergency shelter was opened at the First Baptist Church, 434 North Pleasant Street last winter (2009-2010). The site provided safe shelter, hot meals and outreach social services to over 50 homeless individuals. The average number of guests per night was 12; during the coldest months of the winter, up to 23 people per night sought shelter and a hot meal; over 1,200 meals were provided during the shelter season by volunteers. With the cooperation of the Amherst Police Department, Town authorities, the faith-based community, social service agencies and volunteer residents, the local homeless population was not only provided shelter and meals, but the needs of individual guests were able to be addressed.

An emergency shelter allowed necessary social services, medical treatment, employment and housing assistance to be administered; a greater knowledge and understanding of the needs of the homeless population was acquired. While homeless individuals are, by necessity, more transient compared to residents in Amherst with housing, the majority of shelter guests considered themselves to be "local" members of the community, either living in Amherst or travelling within the Valley to seek safe shelter. Although without a "proper" address in Amherst, consistent guests at the emergency shelter last winter were primarily members of "our" community. Those who were not consistent, local guests typically arrived because of emergency situations that would otherwise have left them to seek unprotected shelter on the streets. The Amherst Police Department and EMTs from the Fire Department worked cooperatively to insure a safe environment for guests and responded, when necessary, to emergency medical needs (which might have gone undetected if guests were on the street).

Since the shelter was opened, over 20 percent of guests have secured permanent housing and/or were assisted by local social service agencies for benefits they were entitled to receive and/or sought treatment for conditions that can be attributed, at least in part, to their homeless status.

Milestone, based on its experience operating the overflow emergency shelter in Springfield and in anticipation of its operation of an emergency shelter in Amherst for the

2010-2011 season, seeks to have secured housing for 30% of shelter guests at the close of the 2011-2012 shelter season. This goal reflects the recent efforts by the Town of Amherst to specifically address issues of homelessness within the community. Without a shelter, the resident homeless population was not served in the Town after business hours. With a shelter that includes social service outreach, homeless individuals will have greater access to those services that already exist as well as services that were previously unavailable.

**2. If applicable, describe and document the availability and source of matching or other funds needed to complete the project.**

The Committee on Homelessness's letter of support (attached), acknowledges that past funding to manage and operate an emergency homeless shelter during the coldest months of the season has been inadequate to cover the actual cost of providing services.

The current budget for the 2010-2011 season of \$75,000 would not be feasible were it not for the in-kind and private support that has been extended by organizations and individuals in the Amherst community (the First Baptist Church, Lutheran Church, Amherst College, etc.) to supplement the cost of managing and operating the facility and the outreach services it provides.

While the current project builds upon this strong community of support—both financially and through volunteer participation—the continued feasibility of providing emergency shelter for those in our community that are most vulnerable requires a commitment to fund these services based upon a realistic projection of their actual costs.

To this end, Milestone, its partners, and members of the community that strongly support the continuation of these critical services request that the Community Development Committee recognize that the “gap” in funding—while proven to be closed in the short term—is not sustainable in the long term to address the need.

Milestone's proposal for 2011-2012 thus reflects an increase in funds that have been requested in the past, while extending a commitment to continue to leverage Town funds through in-kind support, private fundraising (i.e. for site renovations to comply with all applicable codes) and alternative grant opportunities that can be applied toward an emergency shelter for the 2011-2012 season. Alternative grant opportunities include Continuum of Care/HUD grants for emergency shelter and social services, administered through the regional HUD office in Northampton. The grant cycle for these grants begins this winter (2011), with the final awarding of grants to be determined in November of 2011.

The current emergency shelter plan focuses on the immediate need to provide basic shelter and nutrition to +/- 16 individuals per night. Should funds be generated that exceed the actual cost—and cover the gap—for providing these basic services, any

subsequent funding will be applied to extend the outreach for those critical social services that currently represent a benefit, rather than a primary focus, of any emergency shelter model that is feasible at current funding levels.

**3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved in the project as well as internal controls.**

**Management/Staffing/Volunteer Plan:**

The shelter will have 2 staff on duty at all times (1 male, 1 female). Staff will be trained in all necessary duties as required by law, to include necessary CPR/First Aid/Blood-borne pathogens training for staff (and selected volunteers, as determined). Trained volunteers (3-4 per night) will assist staff and guests in the nightly operations of the shelter. Our staff supervision plan will strictly adhere to opening and closing hours of the facility, with particular attention to advance set-up of the facility prior to opening each night and prompt closing in the morning to clean the facility for church use during the day. [Note: FBC site manager and crew anticipate that extending the hours one hour in the evening and one hour in the morning will significantly contribute to better transitions for guests and staff this winter.]

Staff will administer an assessment tool (sample, attached) developed by Milestone and Vita Nova to maintain accurate records of shelter guests (both quantitative and qualitative); we will promptly comply with all CDBG and Town requirements for reporting data and outcomes, including financial and budgetary reports, as required.

The Management Team will include the following personnel experienced in both the administration of direct services to the homeless and sustaining an environment of care and compassion for those in need:

Executive Director: Jack Desroches is the founder of Milestone Ministries as well as an experienced business executive and founder, in 1976, of his own successful production and event management company (Milestone Productions and Events; [www.milestoneevents.org](http://www.milestoneevents.org); profile, attached). Mr. Desroches has a proven track record of applying his extensive business experience and “get it done” approach to addressing the material and spiritual needs of the most vulnerable populations in the Pioneer Valley. Under his leadership, Milestone has brought together an effective, skilled and collaborative network of highly qualified and caring professionals and volunteers who are inspired by his mission and deep commitment to community service.

Consulting Manager: Kevin Noonan will join the project management team of Milestone through his affiliation as a consultant to the First Baptist Church. Mr. Noonan’s brings with him over 30 years of experience directing services to the homeless, low-income and refugee populations in the United States, Asia, Africa and Central America. As Executive Director for twenty years of Open Pantry Community Services of Springfield, MA (a private, non-profit agency with an annual budget of \$3.4M operating nine distinct programs for the poor,

homeless and disadvantaged), his knowledge of the management and operations of sheltering represents an exceptional asset to the Milestone/Vita Nova/FBC partnership proposal.

Operations Manager: Frank Kelly has served the homeless and low-income communities of the region for many years as a senior staff member of Friends of the Homeless-Springfield and, most recently, Milestone. In his capacity as Case Manager for Friends and Milestone staff supervisor, he has overseen the Springfield overflow shelter since its inception in 2007. Mr. Kelly's tireless dedication to the hands-on work of operating a shelter has earned him the reputation in the human services community of being an inexhaustible advocate on behalf of the homeless. Mr. Kelly will be responsible for the overall operations of the shelter and the supervision of the on-site Program Manager.

Program Manager (to be named): The Program Manager will have extensive administration experience (preferably with a master's level degree) and a demonstrated commitment to serving the needs of homeless and low-income individuals. He/she will have the ability to manage both direct and indirect reports as well as experience working with volunteers, familiarity with budgets and financial reporting, and knowledge of homeless shelter operations. He/she will be able to communicate effectively with staff and volunteers, clinical outreach workers, members of the human service and faith-based community and homeless individuals. Candidates for this position are currently being considered.

Manager of Volunteers and Assessment: Eric Donaldson, representing Vita Nova, has illustrated his commitment to ministering to the needs of the homeless through his work at the overflow shelter in Springfield last winter and as volunteer coordinator for The Warming Place in Amherst last winter. Mr. Donaldson will be instrumental in applying the Milestone model of compassionate care to the recruitment of highly motivated and productive volunteers and insuring that staff fulfill both the policies and commitment required of the Milestone sheltering model. His oversight of the administration of Milestone's effective assessment tools will insure that both quantitative and qualitative criteria be balanced to address the complex needs of homeless individuals. Mr. Donaldson will work closely with the Program Manager to schedule and train volunteers and serve as liaison to on-site outreach service providers.

Direct Services Staff: Individuals will be hired from a diverse pool of candidates to provide direct services and care of shelter guests based upon their experience serving the homeless population and, equally important, their commitment to fulfilling Milestone's unique model of compassionate sheltering. Direct services staff will report to the Program Director and work closely with the Manager of Volunteers and Assessment.

Site Manager: Jerry Gates, member of the First Baptist Church, will oversee the facilities and church personnel responsible for maintenance and cleaning, as well as serve as shelter liaison to the Pastor and Deacons. Mr. Gates will continue to lend his site expertise and dedication to the process of working with the town and community members to insure that the shelter for the upcoming year is in compliance with all local and state requirements and is a welcoming, clean and safe destination for the homeless during the cold winter months ahead.



Site Supervisor: Rafael Reyes will lead the daily operations at the FBC site, including maintenance and cleaning. Mr. Reyes is a member of the First Baptist Church and, as he illustrated last year when he served in this capacity, he runs a tight ship. He and his able crew (including Joe Dawlen, who runs operations for the weekly food pantry) will insure that the facilities are in top working order, clean, and represent the commitment that they and the Church have made to provide this critical service for the homeless.

#### **Volunteer Management:**

Volunteers from the community will have an important role in the operation of the shelter. Their participation will maximize the duties and efficiency of paid staff, maximize the ratio of guests to on-site workers, and instill a welcoming and compassionate environment in which guests feel comfortable and safe. Volunteers will be recruited throughout the local community, representing the local colleges and the University (i.e. Amherst College Center for Community Engagement, Smith College community outreach volunteers, various UMass community service organizations), local residents, and members of the faith-based community (including Vita Nova, the Unitarian Church, Korean Church, the Congregational churches, Jewish and Catholic communities). Rather than seeking to recruit only “our” volunteers, Milestone and Vita Nova will make it a goal to build support for the homeless in all realms of the local community. In addition, our policy will include the recruiting of volunteers who will contribute to the goal of securing housing for as many shelter guests as possible during the shelter season.

The program will adhere to a clear and stringent volunteer policy in which all volunteers will be screened for appropriateness and scheduled on an as-needed basis. In order to maintain a peaceful environment for the guests, trained volunteers will be scheduled in advance and will not arrive after lights-out (11:00 p.m.).

Our first priority in training staff and volunteers will be to make sure all of our guests are treated with respect and kindness; anything less will not be acceptable. The shelter will operate with the understanding that it serves as the guests’ home each evening and we will expect our staff and volunteers to treat guests appropriately.

All staff and volunteers will be fully trained to access services in the community, and will know where and when to refer guests for appropriate local or regional assistance.

#### **4. Citing past accomplishments, document that the agency has the necessary past expertise to conduct the activity and has successfully completed past activities in a timely manner.**

Milestone’s sheltering model has proven successful since its inception in 2007. The following data reflect outcomes from the past year in which Milestone managed and operated the Emergency Overflow Shelter in Springfield.

#### **Friends of the Homeless / Milestone Overflow Shelter 2009 / 2010 Season Summary Data**

Total guests for the season (November 3, 2009 – April 26, 2010): 89 men

Average length of stay: 42 nights

**Percentage of guests housed : 32 - 36%**

*23 Housed in their own apartments*

*8 Reunited with family members*

*1 Enrolled in long-term program*

32 guests left on their own

21 guests were asked to leave for various reasons

1 guest was incarcerated during stay

1 guest passed away during stay

2 guests remained at the end of the season

7 Ambulance Calls

0 Police Calls

**Services Provided**

- Weekly health care services provided by Healthcare for the Homeless.
- Twice weekly mental healthcare (group and individual) provided West Central Family Counseling.
- Weekly housing assistance provided by City of Springfield office of housing.
- Assistance with furniture and moving for guests that moved into their own housing.
- Budgeting and money management assistance provided by volunteers (retired banking and accounting executives).
- Nightly tutoring and resume assistance provided by qualified staff and volunteers.
- Nightly mentoring and fellowship provided by qualified staff and volunteers.

4. **Please submit a program budget that includes all sources of revenue and all expenses.**

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**SHELTERING BUDGET**

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The following budget reflects both direct budgetary costs as well as the value of confirmed in-kind contributions. Milestone has actively sought to maximize funding from municipal/taxpayer sources and leverage resources in support of homeless initiatives that have been extended by local community organizations and institutions to best reflect the actual costs of sheltering. **START-UP COSTS:**

<b>Quantity Required</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost to Budget</b>	<b>In-Kind Value</b>
10	Cots—replacement cots from 2010-2011 season	---	\$1,200.00
2	Coffee pots	---	\$60.00
1	1000 watt microwave oven	---	\$85.00
1	Refrigerator	---	\$300.00
1	Television 19"-30" used ok	---	\$150.00
1	DVD VCR Combo	----	\$125.00
1	Various Cleaning Supplies and equipment	---	\$300.00
1	Various office equipment, computer, printer/copier	\$400.00	
30	Chairs	----	\$500.00
4	6' Folding Tables	----	\$180.00
1	Coffee,snacks, etc start up qtys.	----	\$500.00
1	Plates, cups,napkins, etc.	----	\$300.00
30	Blankets	\$400.00	\$600.00
20	Sheets and Pillow cases	\$300.00	\$600.00
20	Pillows	\$100.00	\$200.00
2	First Aid Kits	---	\$60.00
	Training	\$400.00	

1	Rent (FBC site)	\$16,000.00	---
1	Insurance	\$6,000.00	---
	Program administration	\$12,000.00	
	Estimated Total Required Opening Cost	\$35,600.0	(\$5,460.00)

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**ESTIMATED WEEKLY PAYROLL**

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Position	Hours per week	Hourly Rate	Subtotal	% Taxes, UE Ins. Etc.	\$ Taxes, UE Ins. Etc.	Weekly Payroll
Intake Staff	154	\$10.00	\$1,540.00	18.00%	\$277.20	\$1,817.20
Supervisor	20	\$18.00	\$360.00	18.00%	\$64.80	\$424.80
Prog. Dir.	20+					\$462.00
Total weekly payroll						\$2,704.00
Total season payroll						\$70,304.00

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**WEEKLY EXPENSES**

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Qty. Required	Item	Estimated Unit Cost	Estimated Total Cost
	Laundry		\$10.00
7	Food	\$50.00	\$350.00
7	Toiletries	\$7.00	\$49.00

Weekly misc. expenses	\$409.00
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Season Total Misc. Expenses	\$10,634.00
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**SUMMARY OF EXPENSES**

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Startup Cost	\$35,600.00
Payroll	\$70,304.00
Misc. Expenses	\$10,634.00
Total	\$116,538.00
Town of Amherst	\$115,000.00
Funding Gap	\$1,538.00

**Total Funding Requested: \$115,000.00**

## **E. Impact**

**Describe the impact the activity will have on the specifically identified needs. What measurable improvements will result from the activity? How much of the need will be addressed? Define the direct and indirect outcomes that will result from the project. Identify quantitative and qualitative measures determine that the outcomes are achieved.**

The primary impact of the emergency shelter will be reducing the risk to loss of life among our community's homeless population during the coldest winter months.

Once this primary need is met, Milestone and its partnering organizations focus on extending social services, housing assistance, employment opportunities, and appropriate treatment to those individuals in need, based upon their particular situations. Last year, Milestone successfully secured housing for over 30% of homeless individuals seeking shelter at its Springfield shelter location. Ultimately, securing safe, affordable housing for each homeless person would remediate the need for an emergency shelter at all. Data and experience, however, tell us that housing is only part of the equation for addressing the needs of the homeless. Moreover, the population of homeless individuals in a community is far from stable. Securing housing for 30% of shelter guests does not mean that, over three years, the entire homeless population will be housed and the need for emergency shelter resolved. The impact of the project can therefore be determined through quantitative data on the number of individuals housed by the end of the shelter season with the goal of achieving 30% of the population securing housing. Qualitative measures can assess the impact not only on the improvement of quality of life for those who have secured housing, but also on the impact that sheltering has on building a support network for those individuals that have secured housing or for those who continue to seek housing or, for a variety of reasons, choose to remain homeless. Either way, the project has a significant impact on both achieving the tangible goal of housing homeless individuals and identifying and assisting those most at risk in our community that have traditionally been unserved through greater access to social services and a support network.

## **F. Evaluation**

**Goals & Assessments: Please explain your short-term goals and long-term goals. Describe the changes in the target population that indicate the program's success. How will these changes be measured? Will anticipated changes affect the municipality's responsibility to this target population? How will the impact of this service on individual clients be tracked over time? Will there be additional beneficiaries? Will this service enable clients to become self-sufficient? How is this service linked to other human/social service programs in the community?**

Milestone's success in providing shelter, social services and, in many cases, achieving independence for homeless individuals is centered on the development of an Assessment process that is initiated when guests arrive at the shelter and followed throughout Milestone's work with each individual. The attached Assessment document represents a process designed to move

homeless individuals through a continuum of care that, ultimately, can result in not only securing permanent housing, but achieving a quality of life that results in achievement and autonomy. Milestone's policy is to track and build relationships with homeless guests that provide the support necessary to become self-sufficient.

#### **G. Agency Information**

**Please provide an overview of your organization, including length of time in existence, experience in successfully conducting activities for which funding is being sought, and skills and current services that reflect capacity for success.**

Please see attached Proposal and Operating Plan.